

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 04790 070707Z

ACTION EA-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1491

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PEPR MOPS MARR KS KN US

SUBJ: REPATRIATION OF NORTH KOREAN FISHERMEN

REF: SEOUL 4771

1. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE UNC AND MND REGARDING REPATRIATION OF NORTH KOREAN FISHERMEN CONTINUED INTO THE EVENING OF JUNE 6. IN AN EFFORT TO MEET ROK REQUIREMENTS GIVEN PARA 3 REFTTEL, COMMAND HAS INCLUDED IN MAC STATEMENT REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE FISHERMEN INVOLVED HAVE MADE THE NECESSARY STIPULATION. STATEMENT AVOIDS CHARACTERIZING VESSEL IN ANY MANNER AND STATES ONLY THAT REMAINING CREWMEN WERE NOT INVOLVED IN INTRUSION OR IN FIRING ON ROK PATROL VESSELS. THEREFORE, FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS CREW WILL BE REPATRIATED. DETAILS OF REPATRIATION WILL BE WORKED OUT AT SECRETARY'S MEETING WHICH IS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER MAC MEETING. POTENTIAL CONTENTIOUS POINT IS FACT THAT CREW MEMBERS WILL NOT BE PHYSICALLY RETURNED UNTIL JUNE 13 TO ALLOW THEM TO COMPLETE TOUR OF ROK.

2. COMMENT: UNC HAS DONE EXCELLENT AND DIFFICULT JOB IN THIS INSTANCE IN MEETING ROK REQUIREMENTS WHILE
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MAINTAINING INTEGRITY OF THE MAC. IT WAS NECESSARY TO TAKE VERY FIRM POSITION WITH MND REPRESENTATIVES TO ACHIEVE THIS. A COLLATERAL BENEFIT WE BELIEVE WAS THE DEMONSTRATION THAT THE MAC CANNOT BE USED AS A CONDUIT FOR ROK POSITIONS BUT MUST BE USED IN A MANNER DETERMINED BY UNC. IN AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT, MOFA DID NOT ADVISE US OF THE DECISION TO RETURN THE CREWMEN UNTIL 1015 HOURS

JUNE 7, 45 MINUTES BEFORE THE MAC MEETING. BELIEVE THIS
IS DUE TO MOFA NOT BEING ITSELF INFORMED AND NOT
PARTICIPATING IN THE DECISION.
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